

Message Text

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ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ADP-00 CG-00 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

RSC-01 OC-06 CCO-00 RSR-01 SY-10 PRS-01 SS-15 NSC-10

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1160

INFO NAVELEXSYSCOM FOR PME-119

DOD ISA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 3575

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, AS, US

SUBJECT: PROJECT OMEGA: DECLASSIFICATION OF EMBASSY NOTES

REF: CANBERRA 3530

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: EMBASSY HAS BEEN CONTACTED AT HIGH LEVEL BY DFA OFFICIALS WITH REGARD TO POSSIBILITY OF DECLASSIFYING FIVE EMBASSY NOTES PRESENTLY INCLUDED IN DFA SUBMISSION ON PROJECT OMEGA TO JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY WASHINGTON HAS RAISED MATTER OF POSSIBLE DECLASSIFICATION THESE NOTES WITH DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICIALS. AT THIS POINT EMBASSY IS OF OPINION THAT DECLASSIFICATION OF NOTES IS IN INTEREST OF USG. END SUMMARY. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT DEPARTMENT CONSIDER DECLASSIFYING FIVE NOTES AS A ONE- TIME ACTION AND WITHOUT SETTING PRECEDENT FOR OTHER NEGOTIATIONS.

2. EMBOFFS WERE CONTACTED TWICE JUNE 28 BY DFA OFFICIALS CONCERNED WITH OMEGA. ACTING FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY FLOOD CALLED DCM TO REPEAT POINTS MADE BY AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY TO DEPARTMENT IN WASHINGTON IN LAST DAY OR SO. FLOOD IS OBVIOUSLY VERY CONCERNED THAT U. S. UNWILLINGNESS TO ALLOW INCLUSION OF EMBASSY NOTES IN UNCLASSIFIED FORM WILL HAVE HARMFUL EFFECT ON DFA SUBMISSION TO JOINT PARLIAMENT-
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ARY COMMITTEE. IN LATER CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, ALAN BROWN OF DFA INDICATED " SENIOR DEPT. OF STATE OFFICIALS" HAD SAID THEY COULD ACCEPT GOA PROVIDING TEXTS OF NOTES TO MEMBERS OF JOINT COMMITTEE FOR THEIR INFORMATION AS LONG AS COMMITTEE WAS REQUESTED NOT TO

RELEASE NOTES TO PRESS OR PUBLIC. BROWN POINTED OUT THAT THIS WAS HALFWAY MEASURE AND THERE COULD BE NO GUARANTEE COMMITTEE MEMBERS WOULD NOT USE TEXT OF NOTES AS THEY SAW FIT.

3. IN SUM, DFA OFFICIALS, WHILE APPRECIATIVE OF CONCESSION MADE BY DEPARTMENT, STILL FORESEE CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY IN KEEPING TEXTS OF EMBASSY NOTES FROM PUBLIC. MOREOVER, THEY APPEAR CONVINCED THAT AN EFFORT TO CONTROL NOTES AT THIS STAGE WOULD IMPUTE AN UNDESIRABLE AND UNWARRANTED DEGREE OF SECRECY TO DFA SUBMISSION. THEY SEEM ALSO TO BELIEVE THAT ANY ATTEMPT TO INSTRUCT MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ON DISPOSITION OF NOTES ALREADY IN THEIR POSSESSION WOULD REDOUND TO THE DISADVANTAGE OF FAIR AND IMPARTIAL CONSIDERATION OF OMEGA PROJECT.

4. AS EMBASSY SEES IT, SITUATION IS A PRACTICAL ONE INVOLVING THE INABILITY OF DFA TO CONTROL FURTHER DISSEMINATION OF THESE NOTES AND THE INEFFECTIVENESS WHICH DFA SUBMISSION TO PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE LIKELY TO HAVE IF NOTES ARE NOT INCLUDED AS PART OF DFA SUBMISSION. EMBASSY TENDS TO AGREE WITH DFA ASSESSMENT THAT ATTEMPT NOW TO WITHDRAW OR RESTRICT USE OF NOTES TO JOINT COMMITTEE WOULD HAVE DELETERIOUS EFFECT UPON THEIR SUBMISSION. WHILE IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT POINTS IN FAVOR OF PROJECT OMEGA WILL BE MADE IN OTHER GOVERNMENTAL SUBMISSIONS, I. E. ADOD AND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT, THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT DFA SUBMISSION PROVIDES BASIC INFORMATION ON NEGOTIATIONS WHICH ARE INTEGRAL PART OF ENTIRE GOVERNMENTAL PRESENTATION.

5. WHILE EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS USUAL RULE IS THAT SUBSTANCE OF NEGOTIATIONS IN GENERAL SHOULD NOT BE REVEALED AT LEAST UNTIL AGREEMENT HAS BEEN CONCLUDED, WE BELIEVE THERE ARE FACTORS INVOLVED IN THIS SITUATION WHICH MIGHT MAKE STRICT APPLICATION OF THIS RULE INADVISABLE AND CONTRARY TO INTERESTS OF USG. EMBASSY'S UNDERSTANDING OF OTHER OMEGA AGREEMENTS IS THAT ALL HAVE BEEN COMPLETED AND POSSIBILITY THAT THESE AGREEMENTS WOULD BE REOPENED FOR NEGOTIATION AS A RESULT OF REVEALING NEGOTIATIONS WITH AUSTRALIA ON OMEGA APPEARS TO BE REMOTE. IT IS ALSO OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT FINANCIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR AUSTRALIAN STATION WOULD HAVE LITTLE OR NO AFFECT CONFIDENTIAL

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UPON FINANCIAL CONDITIONS REACHED UNDER OTHER OMEGA AGREEMENTS. IN ANY CASE, FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH AUSTRALIA WOULD BE REVEALED WHEN PRESUMPTIVE FINAL AGREEMENT IS PUBLISHED.

6. THERE APPEAR TO BE TWO SETS OF OMEGA FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS, I. E. THOSE WITH FRANCE AND JAPAN IN WHICH THE PARTICIPATING GOVERNMENT HAS AGREED TO UNDERWRITE ALL COSTS (EXCEPT U. S.- SUPPLIED EQUIPMENT) FOR THEIR STATIONS, AND THOSE WHERE USG HAS AGREED TO PAY LION'S SHARE OF ALL THE COSTS (INCLUDING EQUIPMENT). EXAMPLES OF THE LATTER ARRANGEMENTS WOULD APPEAR TO BE THOSE WITH NORWAY, ARGENTINA, LIBERIA AND TRINIDAD. ALTHOUGH THE AUSTRALIAN CONTRIBUTION WHICH IS REVEALED IN THE EMBASSY NOTES ON THE SUBJECT APPEARS TO BE SMALL RELATIVE TO THE TOTAL COST OF THE STATION, IT APPEARS TO US

THAT WHATEVER FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE HERE WOULD NOT HAVE A DIRECT EFFECT UPON A FUNDING FOR OTHER OMEGA STATIONS.

7. WHILE EMBASSY IS UNABLE TO JUDGE WIDER RAMIFICATIONS OF MAKING EXCHANGE OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH AUSTRALIA ON OMEGA PUBLIC AT THIS TIME, WE WOULD HOPE THAT USG HAS FLEXIBILITY TO DO THIS AS ONE-TIME EXCEPTION AND WITHOUT PRECEDENT FOR OTHER NEGOTIATIONS. IT IS ALSO OUR BELIEF THAT REVELATION OF FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR AUSTRALIAN STATION WILL NOT IN LONGER RUN HAVE DETRIMENTAL AFFECT UPON USG POSITION IN THIS REGARD. WE HAVE ALREADY INFORMED DFA THAT CONDITIONS NEGOTIATED PRIOR TO JUNE 30, 1973 MIGHT NOT APPLY THEREAFTER. IMPLICATION, OF COURSE, WHICH IS FULLY UNDERSTOOD BY GOA OFFICIALS INVOLVED, IS THAT SHOULD THEY DESIRE OMEGA STATION IN AUSTRALIA, NEW FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS MAY HAVE TO BE DRAWN UP BEARING IN MIND POSSIBILITY THAT USG WILL NO LONGER HAVE FUNDS AVAILABLE ON WHICH PRIOR FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS WERE DRAWN UP.

8. IN SUM, EMBASSY BELIEVES USG SHOULD AGREE TO USE OF EMBASSY NOTES IN DFA PRESENTATION TO JOINT COMMITTEE IN UNCLASSIFIED FORM. THIS AGREEMENT COULD BE GIVEN WITHOUT FANFARE OR DRAWING ATTENTION TO FACT THAT INFORMATION IN THE NOTES IS NORMALLY CONSIDERED TO BE CLASSIFIED FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW. GOA OBVIOUSLY WILLING TO DECLASSIFY

ITS NOTES ON THIS SUBJECT. OUR MUTUAL AIM IS TO PROVIDE FULL AND FAIR EXPOSITION ABOUT SUBJECT WHICH CURRENT GOVERNMENT WAS UNABLE TO LEARN ABOUT DURING ITS YEARS IN OPPOSITION.

9. IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT THAT PRIME MINISTER AND OTHER LEADING CONFIDENTIAL

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GOVERNMENT MEMBERS ARE ATTEMPTING TO FOLLOW POLICY OF OPEN GOVERNMENT IN WHICH BOTH PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE MADE FULLY AWARE OF IMPLICATIONS OF GOVERNMENT ACTIONS EXCEPT WHERE NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS ARE INVOLVED. IF WE PREVENT PUBLICATION OF EMBASSY NOTES (WHICH ARE UNFORTUNATELY ALREADY IN HANDS OF SENATE COMMITTEE) IT WILL BE MORE DIFFICULT TO CONVINCE PUBLIC THAT OMEGA DOES NOT HAVE ROLE IN NUCLEAR MATTERS AS HAS BEEN CLAIMED BY SOME NEWSPAPERS AND HOSTILE ACADEMICS.
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